



Weekly Drought Brief Friday, May 23, 2014

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Recent Precipitation: Very little precipitation fell from Friday, May 16 through Thursday, May 22:

- **Hetch Hetchy:** 0.48" in the last week. 20.39" since July 1, **56%** of normal by this date.
- **Pollock Pines:** 0.36" in the last week. 28.00" since July 1, **53%** of normal by this date.
- **Folsom:** No rain. 16.13" since July 1, **72%** of normal by this date.
- **Fresno:** No rain. 4.89" since July 1, **44%** of normal by this date.
- **Los Angeles:** No rain. 5.83" since July 1, **39%** of normal by this date.
- **Modesto:** No rain. 7.00" since July 1, **55%** of normal by this date.
- **Oroville:** No rain. 19.56" since July 1, **64%** of normal this date.
- **Redding:** No rain. 21.20" since July 1, **63%** of normal by this date.
- **Sacramento:** No rain. 10.26" since July 1, **49%** of normal by this date.
- **Shasta:** No rain. 34.62" since July 1, **54%** of normal by this date.
- **Willits:** No rain. 34.52" since July 1, **70%** of normal by this date.

Near-term Outlook for Precipitation: Almost no precipitation is expected in the next week.

Fire Activity: Last week 9 fires burned in San Diego County and 1 in Santa Barbara County. These fires have been almost entirely extinguished at this point. Damage from the fires included:

- Over 27,000 total acres burned.
- At least 72 homes, 18 apartment units, and 6 other buildings damaged.
- Over 120,000 evacuation advisories or notices were made by authorities in San Diego County.
- Over \$20 million in preliminary estimated costs to fight those fires.
- Over \$30 million in damage to homes, property and infrastructure quantified to date.

CAL FIRE reports they have responded to 1,661 wildfires across the state since January 1, burning 14,826 acres. This year's fire activity is well above the year-to-date average of 933 wildfires for 5,895 acres. 160 new wildfires were reported over the past week.

While drought conditions have continued to lead to a significant increase in the number of wildfires, additional firefighters, fire engines and firefighting aircraft staffed earlier than normal have allowed CAL FIRE to contain these wildfires quickly in most cases.

Snow survey: The final manual [snowpack survey](#) of the season was conducted on Thursday (May 1) and showed California snowpack at 18% of normal. A more [recent update](#) using automated devices shows snowpack at 5% of normal as of May 23.

Reservoir Levels (% capacity): [Reservoir Levels](#) as of May 22 remain low, including: Don Pedro 53%; Exchequer 30%; Folsom Lake 58%; Lake Oroville 50%; Millerton Lake 57%; New Melones 34%; Pine Flat 40%; San Luis 44%; Shasta 50%; and Trinity Lake 50%. An update of water levels at [other smaller reservoirs](#) is also available.

Vulnerable Water Systems: The California Department of Public Health is providing technical and funding assistance to help several communities facing near-term drinking water shortages and is monitoring water systems across the state to determine where else it can provide support. Updated information can be found at the [CDPH Drinking Water Program](#) website.

KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM LAST WEEK

- **Drought Impact Assessment:** UC-Davis just released an analysis of the economic impact of the current drought on the Central Valley. This assessment was commissioned by the California Department of Food and Agriculture to better understand the scale of needed emergency drought response. Projected impacts on the Central Valley include:
 - A shortage of 6.5 million acre feet of surface water in the Central Valley.
 - About 5 million acre feet in this deficit will be made up by pumping groundwater. The resulting 1.5 million acre feet of shortage is about 7% of typical agricultural water supply in the Central Valley.
 - Based on this water shortage, the study estimates 410,000 acres of fallowed land, which translates to the loss of 14,500 jobs and \$1.7 billion in direct and indirect economic impact.

This study focuses on irrigated agriculture in the Central Valley during the remainder of 2014. It does not quantify economic impacts of livestock production nor the fishing industry, nor does it project economic impacts into future years. UC-Davis will release an assessment of the drought's agricultural impacts for the whole state later this summer.

- **US Senate passes drought bill:** Yesterday (Thursday) the Emergency Drought Relief Act authored by Senator Feinstein [passed the US Senate](#). This legislation now heads to Conference Committee to be reconciled with [drought legislation authored by Representative Valadao](#) in the House of Representatives.
- **Emergency water curtailments:** The State Water Board [issued curtailments](#) to junior water rights holders on the Scott River last Friday (May 16) to protect senior water rights of the US Forest Service. Also last week the Water Board [adopted regulations](#) regarding minimum flow requirements on three tributaries of the Sacramento River. The flow requirements can be met by voluntary agreements among water users on the tributaries or through curtailments by the State Water Board if the water users are unable to reach voluntary agreements. Updated information on water curtailments can be found on the Water Board's [curtailment webpage](#).
- **Voluntary drought Initiative for landowners:** The California Department of Fish and Wildlife and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries are implementing a [voluntary drought program](#) that allows water users in certain watersheds to enter into individual agreements with these agencies to help maintain enough water for fish habitats without having their water use curtailed.
- **Bureau of Reclamation updates its water supply allocations:** Last week the US Bureau of Reclamation began [releasing water from Friant Dam](#) to meet its contract to the Bureau's San Joaquin Exchange Contractors. The Friant Water Authority has requested a legal injunction that would halt this release pending resolution of the Authority's protest of this action.

- **Water transfers:** The state's Department of Water Resources has approved 7 water transfer agreements totaling 110,000 acre-feet of water, while the Bureau of Reclamation is in the process of approving approximately 100,000 acre feet of water transfers. The Governor's most recent [Proclamation of Continued Emergency Drought](#) called for continued expediting of these voluntary water transfers.
- **Emergency food aid:** The California Department of Social Services has provided over 39,000 boxes of food to date for counties impacted by the drought. This food aid, enabled by emergency drought legislation passed in March, is targeted toward residents economically impacted by the drought. The Department is working with local food banks to ensure that each food bank has a plan to outreach to those most impacted by the drought.
- **Water conservation campaign in full swing:** The state's water conservation campaign, [Save Our Water](#), announced that the [California Pool and Spa Association](#) has launched a campaign, "[Let's Pool Together](#)," to educate pool and spa owners and industry professionals how to maximize water efficiency in the coming dry months.
- **Achieving a New Normal in California Landscapes:** The California Urban Water Conservation Council last week held the first of [two symposiums](#) to explore how to expand water-smart landscaping practices throughout the state. These sessions, held in partnership with state agencies, aim to implement strategies that expand efficient landscaping practices. The second symposium will be held on May 29.
- **Cost Data:** Cal OES continues to gather drought-related costs from state agencies and local governments, which is reported weekly to the Drought Taskforce.
- **Governor's Drought Task Force:** The Taskforce continues to meet daily to take actions that conserve water and coordinate state response to the drought.

Local Government

- **Local Emergency Proclamations:** A total of 44 local Emergency Proclamations have been received to date from city, county, and tribal governments, as well as special districts:
 - **Counties:** Glenn, Inyo, Kern, Kings, Lake, Madera, Mendocino, Merced, Modoc, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, San Joaquin, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Shasta, Sutter, Tulare, Tuolumne, Yuba
 - **Cities:** Brooktrails Township-Mendocino County, City of Willits-Mendocino County, City of St. Helena-Napa County, City of Calistoga-Napa County, City of American Canyon-Napa County, City of Santa Barbara-Santa Barbara County, City of Montague-Siskiyou County, City of Live Oak-Sutter County
 - **Tribes:** Hoopa Valley Tribe in Humboldt County, Yurok Tribe in Del Norte County, Tule River Indian Tribe in Tulare County, Karuk Tribe in Siskiyou/Humboldt Counties, Sherwood Valley Pomo Indian Tribe, Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation
 - **Special Districts:** Lake Don Pedro Community Services District, Placer County Water Agency (PCWA), Twain Harte Community Services District, Carpinteria Valley Water District, Sonoma County Water Agency, Meiners Oaks Water District, Mariposa Public Utility District, Montecito Water District, Goleta Water District, Tuolumne Utilities District, Nevada Irrigation District

- **Water Agency Conservation Efforts:** The Association of California Water Agencies [has identified](#) several hundred local water agencies that have implemented water conservation actions. These water agencies [are responding to the drought](#) by implementing conservation programs, which include voluntary calls for reduced water usage and mandatory restrictions where water shortages are worst.
- **County Drought Taskforces:** A total of 25 counties have established drought task forces to coordinate local drought response. These counties include: Butte, Kern, Kings, Lake, Madera, Mendocino, Merced, Modoc, Monterey, Nevada, Orange, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Siskiyou, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Yolo.

DROUGHT RELATED WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

[Drought.CA.Gov](#): California's Drought Information Clearinghouse

Governor's [Proclamation of Drought Emergency](#)
 State's Water Conservation Campaign, [Save our Water](#)
 Local Government [Clearinghouse and Toolkit](#)
 California Department of Food and Agriculture, [Drought information](#)
 California Department of Water Resources [Current Water Conditions](#)
 California Data Exchange Center, [Snow Pack/Water Levels](#)
 California State Water Resources Control Board, Water Rights, [Drought Info and Actions](#)
 California Natural Resources Agency, [Drought Info and Actions](#)
 California Department of Public Health, Drinking Water [CDPH Drinking Water Program](#)
 California State Water Project, [Information](#)
 USDA Drought Designations by County [CA County Designations](#)
 USDA Disaster and Drought Assistance Information [USDA Programs](#)
 Small Business Administration Disaster Support: www.sba.gov/disaster